

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2107

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Children's Services
Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to delivery of early learning home visitation programs.

Brief Description: Regarding the delivery of early learning home visitation programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Roberts, Kessler, Kenney and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Children's Services: 2/19/09, 2/20/09 [DP];

Ways & Means: 2/27/09, 3/2/09 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Transfers the administration of home visitation programs from the Council for Children and Families to the Department of Early Learning.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Goodman and Seaquist.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120)

Background:

Home visitation programs deliver services in the home to parents and children and aim to alleviate the effects various family risk factors have on child development. Home visitation programs share a focus on the importance of children's early years, the pivotal role parents play in shaping children's lives, and the belief that one of the best ways to reach families with young children is by bringing the services to them, rather than expecting those families to seek assistance in the community. Offering the services in the home eliminates barriers such as transportation and time and provides a more personalized experience by allowing families

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to interact in a comfortable and natural environment. Rigorous research provides significant evidence of the effectiveness of home visitation programs as an early intervention strategy.

In 1982 the Legislature created the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (WCPCAN) to promote prevention of child abuse and neglect, and to encourage and support effective community prevention efforts. The WCPCAN is a Governor-appointed council that in 2008 was renamed the Council for Children and Families (CCF). The Governor's proposed budget released December 18, 2008, for the next biennium does not include the CCF.

The evidence-based home visitation programs currently operating with CCF grants across the state include:

- Nurse Family Partnership;
- Parents As Teachers;
- Parent-Child Home Program; and
- Project SafeCare.

Summary of Bill:

The administration of home visitation programs is transferred from the CCF to the Department of Early Learning. Legislative findings are established regarding the potential for evidence-based home visitation programs to positively influence early brain development during infancy, toddlerhood, and beyond by supporting parents in families with proven risk factors for poor child outcomes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill acknowledges that the Governor's proposed budget does not continue funding for the CCF, and therefore we may need to reassign the administration of home visitation programs to assure a governance structure for them if the CCF is ultimately not preserved in the biennial budget. The CCF has been an efficient and effective partner with numerous communities around the state and we are hopeful the CCF will continue to administer home visitation programs. But if not, we cannot risk losing these evidence-based programs with significant potential to improve outcomes for numerous children. The parent-child interactions, especially in early years, is critical to healthy child development. Many of the programs currently underway in Washington are making tremendous gains in this area for at-risk families.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; and Cathy Garland, Children's Home Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Ericks, Vice Chair; Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Seaquist and Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hinkle, Ross and Schmick.

Staff: Wendy Polzin (786-7137)

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Ways & Means Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Early Learning & Children's Services:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) What happens in the first five years of life has a large effect on what happens later in life. Evidence-based home visiting can provide long-term cost savings. The Legislature is encouraged to at least maintain the \$3.5 million proved for evidence-based home visitation programs in 2007-09 to serve 900 at-risk children per year. The Council for Children and Families (CCF) has done a good job of administering, monitoring, and partnering to provide these services. The early learning community would prefer to see CCF remain in existence, but if they are not maintained, the Legislature is urged to pass this legislation to continue home visitation under a different governance structure.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; and Cathy Garland, Children's Home Society of Washington, Washington State Association of Head Start, and Early Learning CAP.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.